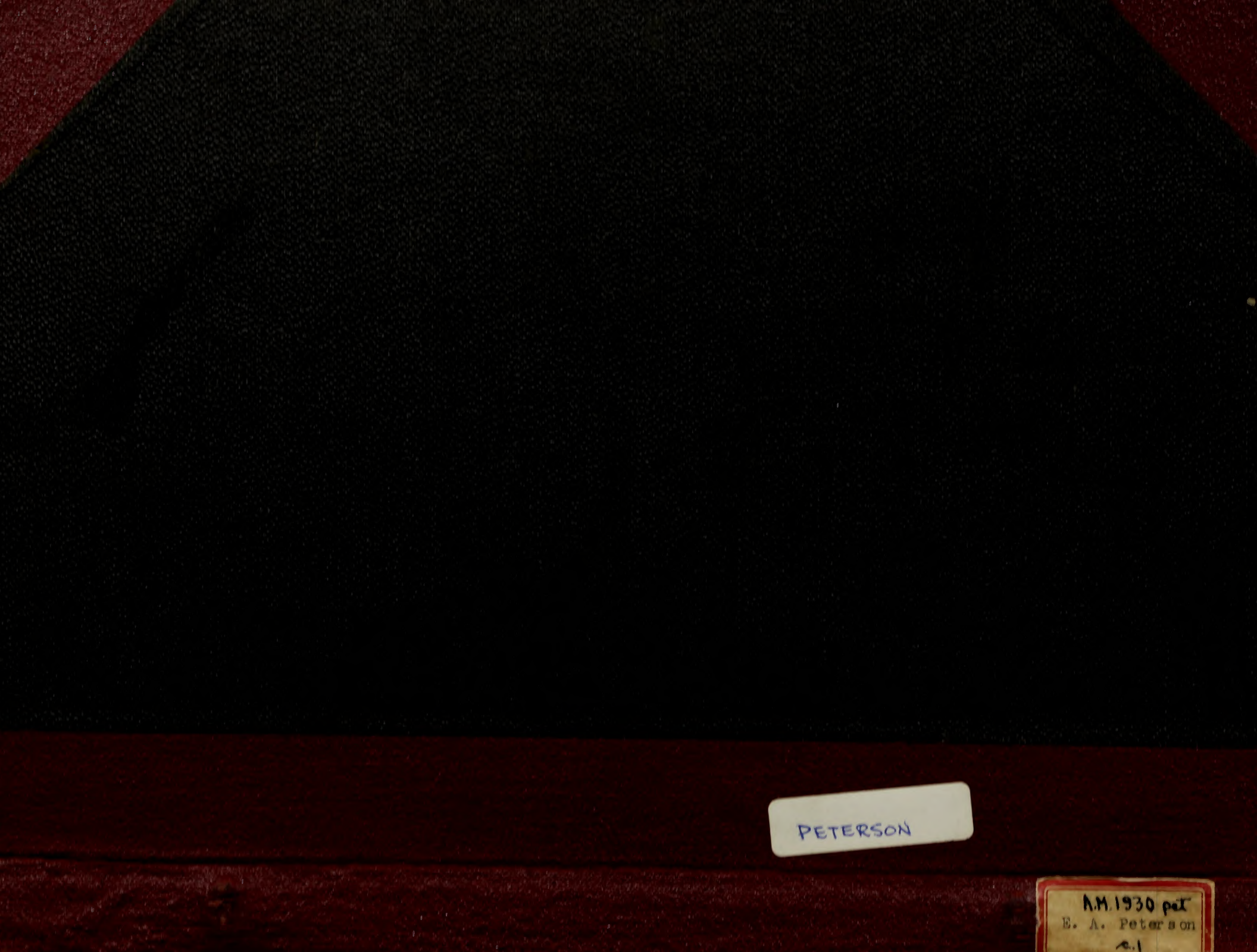
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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDER

Submitted by

Eva Alice Peterson

(B.R.E., Boston University,1923)

In partial fulfilment of requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

1930

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THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDER

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The material for this thesis has been gathered mostly from two sources: My personal experience during my five years of teaching on the Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee; and from the Carnegie Foundation of New York, who have used the school with which I am connected for a laboratory of research.

Due to this latter fact I have had access to much material first hand, which otherwise would have had to be taken from their published reports.

INTRODUCTION

What are the Southern Highlands and who are the Southern Highlanders? One might recognize the term "poor white" or "mountain white" more readily than Southern Highlander, but neither term is correct, as will be explained later. The South Highlander is the American who lives in the southern part of the Appalachian Mountain range. Call him a "mountaineer" if you wish, but remember he is an American.

The novelists know him well--that is they think they do--they have created many very fascinating stories about him for our amusement and false impressions of this queer creature living away off there in his cabin.

Many churches have Mission Schools down in this region, giving many of their worthy parishioners a chance to "do good" by sending these "mountain whites" old clothes in missionary barrels.

Now in the day of good roads, many travel through this mountain region and may see for themselves this mountaineer--may see, but hardly know him. To understand our Southern Highlander, the best way is to go and live with him in his mountains. The pretty stories about him will vanish, and you will grow much wiser and less conceited about yourself whether you are a Northerner, Southerner, Westerner or foreigner.

This particular American has much to give to America if Americans will stop long enough in their haste to truly find him.

INDIANA
OHIO
PENNSYLVANIA
PITTSBURGH
CUMBERLAND
FREDERICK
MARYLAND
DEL.
KENTUCKY
MAYSVILLE
LYNCHBURG
VIRGINIA
N
W
E
S
TENNESSEE
NORTH CAROLINA
TULLAHOMA
SPARTANBURG
SOUTH CAROLINA
DECATUR
CARTERSVILLE
ATLANTA
CEDARTOWN
BIRMINGHAM
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
THE SOUTHERN HIGHLAND REGION
BLUE RIDGE BELT
GREATER APPALACHIAN VALLEY
ALLEGHENY-CUMBERLAND BELT

I. THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

A. Location

A section of the great Appalachian province which extends from New York to Central Alabama may be set aside and called the Southern Highlands. However, it is well to keep in mind that the Southern and Northern Highlands together constitute a whole; a great upland realm extending twelve hundred miles or more from northeast to southwest. Distinctive social customs and standards of living, so interesting to many, are strange only when one forgets that these customs were common to the daily life of our pioneer fathers, in the North and South alike, but a few decades ago as history is measured.

What may be called the Southern Highlands would include the four western counties of Maryland, the Blue Ridge Valley and Allegheny Ridge counties of Virginia, all of West Virginia, eastern Tennessee, eastern Kentucky, western North Carolina, the four northwest counties of South Carolina, northern Georgia, and northeastern Alabama. This mountain region embraces an area nearly as large as the combined areas of New York and New England, and almost equal to that of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

The Southern Highland region includes three divisions: the Blue Ridge Belt on the east, the Greater Appalachian Valley, and the Allegheny-Cumberland Belt on the west.

This paper will deal primarily with that section of the Southern Highlands in Tennessee, the Tennessee mountain section being

I.

of especial interest, as the three belts of the Appalachian province are very well marked therein.

The Allegheny-Cumberland tableland of Tennessee is strikingly marked in its plateau character. Though flat over much of its surface, it has high elevations and ridges rising as mountains on the tableland. Some of these reach a height of thirty-one hundred feet above the sea. Again its surface presents the appearance of a gently rolling country with hills and shallow valleys.

B. Topographical Features

Among the most interesting and peculiar topographical features of the plateau are the coves of the Crab Orchard Mountains. The largest of these is Grassy Cove, containing an area of eight square miles lying far below the level of the range from which it was eroded. Its streams flow to the northeast, disappear in a cove, and doubling in their underground course reappear at the head of Sequatchie Valley, eight miles to the southeast. There are other such coves but smaller, and the process of cove making is still going on in the Crab Orchard Mountains.

Sequatchie Valley is a trough-like valley about four miles wide and sixty miles long, cut lengthwise out of the plateau. It heads about midway between the northern and southern boundaries of the state and opens to the south of Alabama. Walls of stone a thousand feet high enclose it. Its eastern wall, which lies between it and the Greater Appalachian Valley region is known as Walden's Ridge.

II. EARLY SETTLERS AND THEIR EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

The homogeneous people of the Southern Highlands are not the descendents of the "poor whites" of Colonial and slave-holding times. Let us get that point clearly in mind and keep it there, that "poor whites" and "mountaineers" or "Southern Highlanders" are not synonymous. The convicted criminals, the delinquent boys and girls, the impoverished and ne'er-do-wells of England, who became first the laborers and then the flotsam of the English colonies, were the last to enter the mountain region; and when they came, they came in such small numbers that in a broad generalizing they deserve absolutely no consideration.

A. "Pennsylvania Dutch"

The first settlers of the Appalachians were the Swiss and Palatine Germans, loosely termed today "the Pennsylvania Dutch," who about the year 1682 began to settle west of the Quakers in the foothills of the Alleghenies and the Blue Ridge. They were mostly of the Reformed or Lutheran faith, and were democratic in sentiment, industrious, thrifty and efficient, intelligent as farmers or skilled as artisans.

B. "Scotch Irish"

The chief settlers were the Ulstermen of Ireland, "The Scotch Irish" as we call them, and as they are yet the predominant strain of this region from Pennsylvania to Alabama, their history is essential to an understanding of the mountain people and of the problem which they may present.

The Irish rebellion against Queen Elizabeth having been suppressed with ruthless energy, James I in 1607 confiscated the estates of the native Irish in the six northern counties of Ireland known as Ulster. Presbyterian emigrants, some from London, but mostly from the lowlands of Scotland, were settled upon the estates of the Irish. There they set up a Protestantism that has ever since been the most intense and uncompromising in the United Kingdom. Though we call them Scotch-Irish, Irish blood does not flow in their veins. They lived in Ireland, but intermarriage with the Irish was forbidden, and the Romanist and Protestant of Ulster have to this day about the same relation and community of interest as had the ancient Israelite and Philistine. The Scotch Irish are simply undiluted Scotchmen who lived for a time in Ireland and then came to America.

Seemingly favored by the Crown, these Scotchmen in Ireland soon came in conflict with their patron. Their leases began to expire in 1633 and dispute arose between the autocratic landlord and his intractable tenant, the result being emigration.

From County Untrim alone, the historian Froude tells us thirty thousand evicted Protestants emigrated to America within two years. Fiske in his "Old Virginia and Her Neighbors" estimates that within the forty years from 1730-1770, at least half a million souls, or more than half of the Presbyterian population of the north of Ireland, emigrated to the American colonies, of whose population at the outbreak of the Revolution they constituted one sixth.

Landing chiefly at Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston, they scattered themselves along the Atlantic seaboard. They seemed not to

have remained in very large numbers on the coast but pressed westward through both Carolinas and Pennsylvania. Moving in lines of least resistance the Pennsylvania Scotch began settlements further and further southwest in the great Valley, spreading themselves up the Shenandoah Valley and the uplands of Virginia and Tennessee, there uniting with their relatives from the Carolinas who had skirted the far southern foothills.

There were some Irish and some French Huguenot settlers also. The Scotch Irish, however, gave the tone and temper to the settlement of this great region, a tone and temper based on self-reliance, independence, and individualism, and also intolerance toward anything not consistent with these.

These qualities, innate in the pioneers, grew to excessive proportions under the primitive conditions that made every man his own judicial, legislative, and executive authority.

III. HIGHLAND POPULATION OF PRESENT TIME

In any consideration of the people now living in the Southern Higlands, certain questions as to their ethnic composition, distribution, increase, and social groupings inevitably present themselves. One is reminded often by friends of the Highlander that he is the true American; and the type of American usually seized upon as representative of all Highlanders is the early pioneer type. The pioneer, indirectly, is still to be recognized in many of his mountain descendents--tall, lean, clear-eyed, self-reliant, never taken by surprise and of great endurance.

Popular fancy would not be happy if it could not picture the mountaineer in the little log cabin of the pioneer days. No other dwelling will ever fit so well into the wooded hills and coves of our mountain country. Built for service rather than appearance, there is yet real beauty in the long lines of the roof, and real comfort breates in the smoke that curls from its squat chimney. There is a charm about the mountain cabin that few other homes in any region possess.

All mountain homes are not cabins, however, nor all Highlanders the type described. It must be remembered that life within the various areas differs a great deal. The life, homes and industry are not the same in the fertile valley, the rugged mountainside, and the mining settlement. Cities have sprung up in the fertile valley.

The following table gives a clear idea of just what the present day mountain population is composed.

TABLE I. POPULATION OF SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY NATIVITY AND RACE BY BELTS - 1910.[1]

BELT	TOTAL POPULATION	PER CENT					
		WHITE				NEGRO	OTHERS
		Native Born		Foreign Born	Total White		
		Of native parents	Of foreign parents				
Blue Ridge	1,257,230	84.1	0.5	0.3	84.9	14.9	0.1
Greater Appalachian Valley	1,581,307	78.9	1.8	1.0	81.7	18.3	(a)
Allegheny Cumberland	2,491,574	87.8	3.4	2.8	94.0	5.9	(a)
Total	5,330,111	84.3	2.2	1.7	88.2	11.7	(a)

(a) Less than 0.05 per cent

This table is used because no similar table has been compiled from the 1920 Census. However, by a superficial comparison the result proves to be about the same.

[1] Campbell: The Southern Highlander and His Homeland, p. 74

IV. THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDER

A. Home Life

In a study of the Southern Highlander one must surely include his home. It is one of the basic influences of his life.

The physical home may be a log cabin without any windows, or it may be a frame building of two stories, or yet it may be a modern bungalow. Some have candle light only, some oil lamps, some electric light--it all depends upon the location of the home, whether it is at the county seat or far back in the hills.

The "real mountain home" is far back in the hills and not on the highway or at the county seat. It is the home of the rural Highlander. It will either be a little box house or a log cabin, It may not be large, and will generally have windows but not many. Sometimes there is a room upstairs, and that room will be reached by outside stairs or ladder.

The little mountain home will be tucked away on the side of a hill near a stream. In the spring it will be surrounded by blooming dogwood trees and red bud blossoms,- a true fairy land every spring. In the summer pretty flowers grow in the yard around the house. In the fall we find the little cabin in the midst of the prettiest coloring old Mother Nature ever put in a forest; and for the few months during the winter the surrounding greyness is broken by the greenness of the tall evergreen trees. Whatever the season, this little home has a setting of exceeding beauty, a charm and welcome that can never be forgotten by one who comes among the hills to live.

The interior of these rural mountain homes could never be called beautiful as to physical appearance. The typical home out in the hills consists of two rooms, each room one half of the house, a door opening out on to the porch from both.

The furniture is very simple; beds, mountain chairs with their split hickory bottoms, plain homemade tables, and in a few cases of the more prosperous an organ. The walls are unfinished except for the newspaper hangings and may be a calendar or a picture or two of the chromo variety. A few books and old magazines are usual.

Each room has a fireplace and here the cooking takes place except during the summer when it is done out of doors. The house is neat and clean in appearance, the beds well made, each having one or two of the famed coverlets upon it, the handwork of the "old woman" or "Mammy."

Fortunately the summers are long and much of the living may be done out of doors. The family washing is always done outside in the big iron kettle hanging over the fire. The clothes are hung on the fence and bushes to dry. Life is simple and happy in these homes but not easy in the physical routine. However, what makes the home of course is the "Mammy" and "Pappy," and the many children. The rural mountaineer naturally has large families, always a "least one," a name given to the latest arrival.

The rural mountain home is still very decidedly headed by a "Pappy." He is the lord of his household and all obey without question. This Pappy loves his "old woman" and his children. He is not lazy, all

the pleasing stories to the contrary; he does not loaf around the country store all day. The mountain man works hard,--and he works hard for his family. If he is a farmer he works hard because farming in the mountain is bound to be hard. Growing corn on the hillside is not truly a lazy man's job, anymore than is logging and getting the logs to the highway. Both are the work of the rural mountain men. If he is a miner, he works equally as hard. Many writers of popular fiction picture the mountaineer as a very lazy individual, but that is because it makes a better story to sell about him. We do not judge the entire manhood of any city by the "bums" on the park benches, but it would be just as fair.

The Mammy's life is her home and her children,--no bridge parties or teas to bother her. You might ask if the rural mountain women is happy. Judging by a superficial physical standard you might certainly say it was impossible. She works hard; she chops the wood, helps to put in the crop, carries water, hoes the corn, carries straw to fill her bed tick, milks the cows, cares for the hens, helps butcher the hogs, and so on without end. She never has any money of her own; never has seen a movie; never has been on a train; cannot read nor write. And is she happy? Yes, she is. If one wants proof of the fact that happiness does not depend upon material things they should come to know the mountain mother. She is one of the finest characters America has, and America seems very unconscious of her. Her life is changing, and things should be easier for her, but may she never lose that wonderful unnameable characteristic which she now possesses. She is a "true lady" in all that word may mean.

From babyhood the boy is the favored lord of all he surveys. There is a dignity, conscious superiority, in his youthful mien that says more clearly than spoken words that womankind are not his equals. Though by old mountain usage, now yielding in places to the new, he is not his own man till he is of age or marries and makes a home of his own.

The little girls of the mountains are every bit as bright as their brothers and it will not be long before they will face their brothers and share their lordship with them. Conditions are changing rapidly in this respect. More and more, girls are demanding an opportunity to learn; but too often still, if one of the household is ill, if Mammy is busy, or the baby needs tending, "Sis" must stay at home. She is not an unwilling sufferer always, for she loves the freedom of home. The restraints of school prove irksome at times and not infrequently she runs away and leaves education to the menfolk, thus again inevitably sinking in their respect.

She matures early into a vigorous blooming girlhood, whose aspirations are too often blunted and coarsened by the bald and unrelieved hardness of life. She is alternately suspicious, given to fits of fiery temper, emotional and sullen--yet again of a delicate, a touching and gentle sweetness that has in it an unconscious pathos. Though she may appear less responsive than the boy of her age, she is marvelously quick to appreciate the new and adapt herself to changed conditions. Unfortunately this very adaptability, coupled with her emotional and independent spirit, is sometimes her undoing when she is thrust unprotected into the new distractions of urban and industrial centers.

Marriage is her goal. There is little comfort for the spinster, relegated to the hard tasks of life, yet dependent for support upon her male and her married kindred, all of whom are agreed in thinking her a failure. "Then you ben't married," said the weary mountain mother of many children to a teacher from a distant church school, "and you don't look as if you minded it nuther."

The entire family feel a very close love and kinship for each other. The children may go away to school or work, but never grow too proud to enjoy the humble home of their childhood and would never think of being ashamed of their "Pappy and Mammy." The mountaineer has a pride and self-possession which is one of his charms and assets. It makes him master of many situations.

B. Social Life

The rural mountaineer is not without social life,- a social life that is quaint and fascinating. His social circle is limited by roads--his sphere of sociability is much larger during the season of dry roads than during the season of mud. If the home is near the schoolhouse that will be one of his social centers; the other will be the home. Should the home not be near the schoolhouse, then he will have but one social center,- the home. Here a variety of parties will take place. Possibly the most common today are the corn-husking, the crushing of sorghum cane, and the boiling down process of the latter. At these affairs, while the fire glows and the great vat sends up a mist of yellow steam, one may see being played or danced many of the delightfully picturesque mountain dances.

The real old time fiddler should have a word for himself, for he is an institution in the Highlands, and the cheerful scrape of his bow sets the feet involuntarily "a-moving." He seldom assumes the posture of the modern virtuoso, but lays his instrument across his arm or knee and so fiddles away--a sociable note with more of the piercing sweetness generally associated with the violin. A "fiddler's contest" in which all the local celebrities compete for an offered prize is a feature of many a county fair; and he who can beat a measure with a reed on the upper portion of the strings, while the player undisturbed continues his tune, is the object of wondering admiration.

The "singing master" and his singing school is also an institution of the Highlands. He will travel from section to section and conduct his famous schools. These schools form a social event of the season. The rural highlander will hitch up his mules to his wagon; and his family, seated on the mountain chairs which have been placed in the wagon, are off to attend singing school.

C. Religion

In no part of our country will one find a more deep and sincere interest in matters of religion than in the Southern Highlands. The infidel is so rare that the term is almost anathema.

Their religion, it is true, is not very dainty. It is the religion of a stalwart independent people. The highlander's mind is still tinctured very strongly with the Calvinism of his foreparents. God is very real. So are heaven and hell, the good old fashioned hell in which you sizzle for your sins. The Bible is to be taken literally,

or else what good is it? They are still converted and they have religious experiences. These are things common to the religion of the rural Highlander.

The Highlander who has come in contact with formal education has modernized his religion, but not without plenty of thinking and reasoning on his part. Not because it was the thing to do. He is too independent for that.

Denominations are not lacking: Methodists and Baptists would hold first and second place; Presbyterians, Christians, "Holy Rollers" following.

In the rural sections the Circuit Rider is the source and inspiration of the religious life. They very likely have services once a month in the schoolhouse, and they come from far and near for an all day meeting with "dinner on the grounds." The circuit preacher is almost without exception a very sincere man and gives freely of his time and strength. His religion is very simple, and may be truly called, as it is by the mountain people, "old timey kind."

The Circuit Rider is assisted in his care of the religious life of the rural mountaineer by the Evangelist and his Tent Meetings. He comes for a week or two and conducts meetings. Logs are split for the seats, the mourners bench is placed in front of the crude pulpit, the tent is erected, and all is ready. Religious experiences are forthcoming, moving some to shout and yell and throw themselves down upon the sawdust; others take it more calmly.

As valuable and sincere as the evangelist and circuit rider may be and are, they do not satisfy, especially the younger generation. Many of them have been to school, have studied history and science. Others read newspapers and have radios. If their emotional life is to be directed at all, this direction has got to be more modern and more reasonable.

The religious life of the mountain people, especially the young folk, is of vital importance. The younger generation are through with "hell fire," What is to take its place? They are deeply religious and come from generations of people of a deep religious faith. Offer them Harry Emerson Fosdick and they will not turn away, but eagerly accept and worship a greater God.

The religion of the older folks, however, is not to be despised, nor should it be taken from them,- but that could not be done. However, after witnessing a funeral of the rural mountain section, one could not keep from wishing for them a new concept of God.

D. Health

One faces in the Highlands the problem of congestion within homes rather than that of congested neighborhoods. It may seem strange in a country where timber and land are plentiful that houses should not be enlarged to meet the enlarging family. One does, it is true, pass many a rambling old cabin and many a painted new frame house with the little outgrown cabin by its side; but habit is strong, and even when the necessity for crowding has passed, through the occupancy of a larger and better built dwelling, previous conditions of congestion frequently remain. Large families, many times surprisingly large, occupy one or two rooms. There is little understanding, even in those households which are scrupulously clean, of ordinary hygienic and sanitary precautions. Old and young, sick and well, sleep together and use in common the scanty toilet articles. The spread of contagious and infectious diseases is naturally rapid.

Nor are such diseases confined to the home. Even if this be comparatively isolated, neighbors flock to the afflicted household both to give help and because they feel they are not showing a proper interest if they do not do so. Moreover, waste of all sorts, though sometimes burned, is more often thrown out and scattered about by hogs and chickens or finds its way into the nearby creek to be carried on to other households.

No attempt is made to safeguard drinking water, which is still for the most part from springs or shallow wells which run dry in the time of drought. Both wells and springs are frequently polluted through seepage from near-by barn or outhouse, if there be one. Outhouses are the exception however.

How general is the lack of sanitary provisions in the rural Highlands was brought to the public notice a few years ago by the findings of the Survey made by the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission for the Eradication of Hookworm disease. Some of the remedies, however, suggested for its correction were pathetically humorous.

No detail, probably, of the Highlander's living has been more severely critized than his diet, and inasmuch as it has been held responsible for many of his ills it is perhaps worthwhile to see in some detail what is eaten in the ordinary rural mountain home.

While diet varies somewhat in different sections, the staples through most of the rural portion of the mountains are corn and pork. The reasons for this are simple. Corn can be grown throughout the mountain region and can be used as both food for family and stock; and the hogs can be raised with little trouble or expense by turning them loose in the forest to forage for themselves. Corn, moreover, is easily stored and ground as needed, and hog meat can be salted or cured and the fat used in every form of cooking.

The rural mountaineer has cows, of course, but pasture land is poor and the cow has to wander about in a forlorn search for some vegetation. The usual mountain cow has a lean, hungry look; her milk is poor and thin and her flesh tough and hard.

Poultry is the only meat commonly used besides pork, and this is less common than the reports of fried chicken would lead one to expect. Eggs are cheap but do not form so great a factor in the diet as they should.

Variety is occasionally secured for the table by the addition of rabbit, squirrel and 'possum.

In the spring a welcome addition is furnished by "sallets" of cress, poke and various other young greens, and every family has its fenced in garden patch which helps to furnish the summer table. Beans and white potatoes are the common vegetables, but cabbages, beets, sweet potatoes and turnips are raised. Sweet corn is seldom found, but young field corn is often eaten, "roasting ears" being considered a great delicacy. Usually there is also available an abundant supply of wild blackberries, and peaches and apples are found in some sections. Little or nothing is ever done about pruning or spraying so fruit is not abundant nor very good.

But while the season's crop offers possibilities of variety for the winter diet, it does not affect the winter diet as much as it should. For one reason the Highlander has little storage space. The larger houses have lofts, but in the smaller cabins reserve food must be strung from the rafters or stacked upon the floor. Outside cellars are little understood or used and potatoes and other root crops, which may be abundant in the autumn, seldom last through a winter.

A real attempt is made to provide a winter supply of vegetables and fruit. Beans are dried in the pod; peppers and pumkins are sliced and dried before the fireplace or in the sun. Apples are usually spread out on the roof of the shed or cabin, or cured, as peaches are, in the fumes of sulphur. In the more prosperous families jellies are made. Apple jelly, pickles and canning, especially of tomatoes, are now common. Much of this is due to the county agents'

efforts and their canning clubs.

Autumn brings the making of sorghum which, with honey, supplies much of the sweetening used. Bees are kept very commonly, sections of the gum tree serving as hives. The autumn also brings a supply of pawpaws and persimmons, chestnuts, black walnuts and hickory nuts.

However, when the crop is finally gathered and winter closes in the family diet is very much restricted. It is probably safe to say that the main sustenance of many a rural household a good part of the winter is fat pork, beans, potatoes and cornbread, with the addition of sorghum or honey and a strong cheap coffee.

Food is usually poorly prepared. Frying and boiling are the common methods, the former predominating largely. Starchy foods are rarely boiled or baked sufficiently, but whatever is fried is fried a long time, large quantities of grease being used both in preparing and serving.

That the mountaineer is not immune to this diet one may gather from the frequency of sallow complexions and the great prevalence of "risings"--a comprehensive term which may apply to anything from a minute swelling to a carbuncle.

It would seem likely that to the limitations of diet are due also some of the inertia, and even apathy, that are evidenced by many. Tall and lean, the Highlander seems to have, when interested, plenty of endurance; he can walk long distances without apparent fatigue, and he is indefatigable on a hunting or camping trip.

As to the effect of restricted diet in causing pellagra which is being found in the Highlands today, there seems to be little doubt. To what extent the very large use of smuff and tobacco in the mountains, mainly in dipping and chewing, may be accounted for by monotony of the diet and poor cooking, it is difficult to say. The need of stimulants, seemingly felt by many, is probably due, at least in part, to this cause. It cannot be charged against the mountaineers, however, that they drink excessively.

An authentic record of diseases--causes and results--can not be found because the Highlander rarely records a birth or a death. But a list of diseases from which the mountaineer suffers most might read as follows: tuberculosis, typhoid fever, pneumonia, hookworm, and measles. There is also a high rate of infant mortality due to lack of care of the mother before and after childbirth.

Much should be said for the mountain doctor, but the situation is just beyond him. The health problem of the great mountain section must be met and brought under control by patient teaching through wise educational measures and increased professional services.

TABLE II. PER CENT OF ILLITERACY FOR PERSONS TEN YEARS OF AGE AND OVER IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLAND BY RACE AND BY BELTS - 1910.[1]

Belt	Native White	Foreign Born White	Negro	Total
Blue Ridge	13.6	5.0	33.1	16.5
Greater Appalachian Valley	9.0	12.2	26.6	12.4
Allegheny Cumberland	11.0	22.0	26.9	12.4
Total	11.0	19.5	28.5	13.4

TABLE III. PER CENT OF ILLITERACY FOR NATIVE WHITE MALES OF VOTING AGE IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS AND SOUTHERN HIGHLAND STATES. BY STATES - 1910.[2]

State	Total State	Mountain Region
Alabama	10.6	10.6
Georgia	8.7	13.8
Kentucky	11.9	19.5
Maryland	3.4	3.9
North Carolina	14.0	17.1
South Carolina	10.8	14.1
Tennessee	11.3	14.1
Virginia	9.7	12.8
West Virginia	7.5	7.5
	10.6	12.2

These tables are the most recent that can be obtained.

[1]Campbell: The Southern Highlander and His Homeland, p. 261

[2]Ibid, p. 263

E. Education

1. Illiteracy. Those who know the mountain people know that illiteracy is not necessarily synonymous with ignorance, and that an ability to pass a written or oral test is after all an inadequate measure of knowledge. If we accept as a definition of education, "adaptation of life to environment," many a Highlander would compare favorably with some of the college graduates who have come into his community to educate him. However, the fact remains that "reading, writing and arithmetic" are of great value to man.

The illiterate man of the mountains is limited in his knowledge to what has come down to him, to what experience in a certain small neighborhood has taught him, and to what by chance has come in from outside. There has been enough struggle with pioneer conditions to make him self-reliant while those conditions remain; and if his mountain barriers have shut out many things that are good they have also shut out some things that are evil. He has not, however, a wide enough outlook to give him the proper perspective. Like many an individualist elsewhere, he prefers to learn through personal experience with all the attendant risks rather than from the accumulated experience of others. Consequently he must pay for individualism as well as for illiteracy. But the education which sufficed to meet the requirements of the past will not suffice for the future. Conditions are changing and unless the mountaineer be prepared for the necessary readjustments he must fail in the adaptation of life to environment.

Though not a fair measure of knowledge, literacy is still the accepted standard by which the educational status of a region is judged.

According to the census of 1910, of 5,856,420 persons of ten years of age and over within our Southern Highland area, 515,131 or 13.4 per cent were illiterate. This figure without doubt will be changed a great deal by the time the 1930 census returns come out, as the states of this region are doing much to improve education of these people.

2. Schools. In a consideration of the schools of the mountain area, there are three types: (1) Public School; (2) Private School, and (3) the "Moonlight" School.

a. The Public Schools. The State Departments of Education of the Highland area have from time to time passed various laws which if carried out would improve the school system of the mountains, but the carrying out of these laws are not easy and have failed. The States have made the counties responsible in most part for their schools and the educational system in general. So it varies from county to county just what the public school shall be. If the county is wealthy, it may have fair schools, and if the county is poor, it has poor schools. Each county has its County Superintendent and County School Board. They may be well equipped for their positions or may be very poorly equipped. Taking the average, one may describe the typical mountain school system. Each county has its one high school situated at the county seat. Here the boys and girls from all over the country may obtain a high school education. "May obtain" it if they can get to the school, buy their books and provide in some way for their bed and board. On the surface of things it is easily seen that for over one-half of those even anxious to go to high school, such a thing is impossible. They live far out in

the country and they cannot go to town and live because they haven't the money which it would take. Then this situation certainly doesn't tempt the large majority of boys and girls who do not care to go anyway. So a public high school education is closed to the majority of the mountain boys and girls.

More serious than the situation which surrounds the high school is the grammar and elementary school situation.

The number of elementary schools vary a great deal from county to county, but few have enough. The building itself is the one room type--its condition in too many cases is a perfect disgrace to the educational system of America,- seats and desks broken, windows broken, doors broken. Then again you may find the school building in perfect condition and attractive. It all depends upon the community and the teacher.

Attendance is neither compulsory nor regular. The compulsory school law is not enforced for various reasons, some good reasons and some not. Distance is a great factor, many of the youngsters coming four to six miles to school. Naturally they must want to come very much or somebody wants them to come very much; or they simply don't come at all. That is what happens too often, they simply don't and nobody cares. America seems willing to have such a situation in her "glorious land," and does nothing about it but take a census and find out that it exists.

The teacher is poorly equipped as a rule, in many cases not even having a high school education. It is along this line that the

greatest changes are taking place. In some of the Highland districts the teachers must have a high school education, graduating from a certified high school and must attend summer schools in order to retain their teaching certificates. This ruling is not general as yet. Too many of the public schools simply are closed and the children of that district are receiving no education whatsoever. The school term in only a few places is eight or ten months in length, five months being the usual length of the school term. This term is cut short in many cases every year because the teacher leaves. He may be "run off" or he may just "run off" himself. The reasons why the teacher "runs off" and is "run off" are various, and absurd in most cases. Sometimes the teacher's religion is not the right brand; sometimes she or he "talks" (which means to keep company) with the young lady or the young man of an unpopular family; perhaps the teacher punishes a child--some children she may and some she may not; then of course the teacher may truly have some fault which no thinking parent will tolerate in their children's teacher. The life of a rural teacher out in the mountains is not an easy one. Public opinion is a tricky master and public opinion is certainly one of the rural public school teacher's masters.

The public school system throughout the mountain area, although improving, is far from a credit to our nation. It would seem as if it would be hard to find any reasonable excuse for not educating the mountain child. The States, because it is so much easier, spend much of their time and money on the "valley" child and simply leave the mountain child "up yonder."

b. Private Schools. Through the Highlands private schools are mostly "church schools," created and operated to fill in and help along the faulty public school system of this great area. These private schools, whether owned and supported by the churches or private individuals interested in educational work of the mountaineer, have done and are still doing a great piece of work.

They have one very distinct advantage in that they are most often boarding schools, thus making it possible for the boys and girls from the far away places to come and stay. Then, too, it is possible in most all the private schools for the students to work for their board and tuition, making them practically self-supporting.

These private schools have become accredited secondary schools and as a rule have excellent equipment and teachers with the regulation requirements.

The Domestic Science department and Agriculture departments are very important and with their Practice Cottages and School Farms the private school may do much along very practical lines for the students who come to live at them. These school farms are model farms with modern up to date farms and equipment. The boys learn the most practical and modern ways of fertilizing the various kinds of soil, the best way of planting, gathering and storing of crops. Also these farms have standard breeds of cattle, hogs, hens, and so on, proving to the mountain boys the various economical advantages of such. It is the universal custom in the mountain to allow the cattle to roam about at will gathering food from where it may. At the school farms, through practical experiences the boys learn the advantages of more modern methods and theories of raising the farm animals. Information of the modern variety

is what the mountain farmer needs and there is no better way of instructing the mountain boys than putting them to work on a moderl mountain farm. They see for themselves and that is essential to the mountaineer and his education.

The girls have the advantage in the private schools of the contact with the more modern ways of housekeeping. The school may not have a "Practice Cottage" for its girls, but they will have either a course in domestic science where the girl may learn the fine art of housekeeping or she may learn it just by living and working in the dormitory. She will learn the better and more economical ways of cooking. The value of various foods and the need of vegetables and fruit in the diet are emphasized. Surely all this will help the undernourished child of the mountain.

Although many of the private schools throughout the mountains are church schools, supported and owned by various denominations, dogmas, creeds and denominations are left out entirely. These private schools have educated a large percentage of the elementary teachers of the public schools. For college and normal school education the majority of the mountain students go to the "valley."

c. Adult Education. The education of the adults of the Highlands is being met by two very distinct methods: "Moonlight Schools" and the schools based upon the "Danish Folk School" idea.

The Moonlight Schools--the idea is familiar enough--is the night school scheme. Only due to the lack of "street lights" in the mountains, the adults of the mountains go to school on moonlight nights. In the Kentucky mountains the Moonlight schools have had a marked success,

due of course mostly to the spirit behind them. It is not an easy matter for the Highlander to leave his home in the evening and travel to a school building or to the place where the school is being held, but in many places the Highlander does and starts learning to read and write at the age of forty years on up to eighty years.

The Danish system of Folk Schools has been proposed by some to be the educational system for the entire population of the mountains and it has been very successfully carried out in Brasstown, North Carolina. Among the characteristic features of the Danish Folk High School is its emphasis upon all that tends to stimulate idealism and patriotism, teaching Denmark's language, literature, her geography, her accomplishments in history and her potentialities. Emphasis is largely cultural, but lessons are given in branches of natural science which promote an understanding of agriculture in its practical aspects as well as those which add to its dignity and significance.

In the conduct of the school, books play a very subordinate part. Instruction is imparted largely by word of mouth. The teacher must inspire through the "alchemy of personality." No examinations are required for admission, nor does work end with examinations. Neither is there admission certificate to any higher institution. Terms are short--very often arranged to suit the individual. They come because they want to and stay because they like it.

Sir Horace Plunkett, in his investigation of the co-operative movement, examined carefully the work of the Danish Folk Schools and concluded that the extraordinary national progress of the Danes was due to them. He says: "A friend of mine, who was studying the Danish

system of state aid to agriculture, found this to be the opinion of the Danes of all classes, and was astounded at the achievements of the associations of farmers, not only in the manufacturing of butter, but in a far more difficult undertaking, the manufacturing of bacon in large factories equipped with all the most modern machinery and appliances which science had devised for the production of the finished article. He at first concluded that this success in a highly technical industry by bodies of farmers, indicated a very perfect system of technical education. But he soon found another cause. As one of the leading educators and agriculturists of the country put it to him: 'It's not technical instruction, it's the humanities.'"[1]

It is the humanities that the adults of the mountains need. So many for various reasons reach the age of twenty and over without any chance at education of the formal kind and it does seem as if this Danish Folk School system had much in it for adaptation and adoption for educating the mountaineer. The mountaineer must have a formal education, if he is to take his place in the life of our country to the best advantage for all.

Prominent among national educational measures which have helped the cause along is the Smith Hughes Act which "provides a scheme of co-operation between the Federal Government and the States for the promotion of vocational education in the fields of agriculture, trade, home economics and industry."

The state "farm county agents" are doing a wonderful service to the rural mountaineer. There is an agent for the men and an agent for the women, the men gaining knowledge about their farms and the women about their

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[1] Sir Horace Plunkett: Ireland in the New Century, p. 131

housekeeping and homemaking. These county agents form clubs among the boys and girls interesting them in various projects and connecting the club work of the mountain boy and girl with the similar club work of all the rural boys and girls of America. The "4H" club scheme is doing a remarkable thing for the heretofore isolated mountain child.

F. Economic

1. Natural Resources. To one attempting to summarize the assets of the mountain country, there is suggested, first of all, the human asset as represented by its children. However widely opinions may differ as to the extent of the material resources of the mountains and the possibility of their development, there cannot fail to be unanimity on the opinion as to the wealth of children. The Highlander believes in large families; hence, a large supply of manual labor ready to be put to use. But the question is, can this supply of labor be used on the mountain territory, or, because of its largeness, must the possession of this labor use it outside of this native territory? Can the mountains be made to support their population in a successful manner? Whether or not the mountains can support their population in a satisfactory manner, the population intends to stay on the mountains. That is very evident to one who has lived with them. Of course a certain proportion will always go; it is right that they should, and they are needed in our urban civilization. Many, too, will wish to stay if a fair living is possible for them and their children. The chief question here is whether the resources of the Highlands are such as to furnish suitable and sufficient returns for such of the present and future population who wish to remain.

An inquiry as to the support of population raises many questions, but in any consideration of the resources of the Highlands, the great variety of the country must play a prominent part. The three regional belts, into which the mountain section is divided, have certain differences, which are already showing in their life, and

are destined to have a marked effect upon their future development. Moreover, local areas within the belts differ greatly, and the character and development even of certain resources which are common to all areas and belts are strongly affected by different topographic and climatic conditions. Speaking generally, the Greater Appalachian Valley is preeminently suited to agriculture, and its accessibility has made it the seat of many cities; the Western, or the Allegheny-Cumberland belt, is a coal belt--part of the greatest coal field in the country; and the Eastern, or the Blue Ridge belt, while possessing some mineral wealth, is famous for the magnificence of its forests and for its water power.

a. Forests. It is the forest, perhaps, that the majority of people think of first in any inquiry into the natural resources of the Southern Highlands. The forests of the Highlands are part of the great hardwood area which extends on up north through Pennsylvania, New York and New England. Although spruce and pine are common--there being in the southern stretches along the edges of the Piedmont Plateau in Georgia some long-leaf pine--the field is on the whole a region of hardwoods, and it is the largest and most valuable supply left in the United States.

Abused and neglected by the Highlander and desecrated and ruined in many sections by the operations of logging companies, the remnants of these magnificent forests still "sweep over the crests of the mountains" in indescribable beauty. Their great variety is at no time more apparent than in spring, when the varied greens of

the many oaks and hickories are contrasted with the red fruit of the maples, the yellow tassels of the chestnuts, and the bloom of the towering tulip poplar--the whole shot through with the blossom of the dogwood and fringed with a border of redbud.

The beauty of the forest in the fall with its mile upon mile of glowing masses of color does not surpass the winter beauty of the naked trees outlined against the sky and melting into a haze which is but a part of the blue veil that ever hangs above the Highlands.

The eminent botanist, Professor Gray, is quoted as saying that in a thirty-mile trip through western North Carolina he encountered a greater variety of indigenous trees than could be observed in a trip from Turkey through Europe to England, or from the north Atlantic coast to the Rocky Mountain Plateau.

Plenty of evidence from various sources, especially reports from the United States Department of Agriculture, seems sufficient to ascertain that the mountains have a very valuable resource in their forests, especially their hardwood.

The development of this forest resource needs supervision. The increasing scarcity and value of hardwood timber would seem great enough to insure care of what forest is left, and when one sees the industrial and agricultural possibilities of the mountain country that await development and realizes that only through a proper care of its forest will the full benefits of such development be secured to the future, one dares to be hopeful, for surely wisdom and regard for the rights of posterity must both guide and stay the hand of

the man of today. But one becomes discouraged when in travelling he encounters sections of the mountains where the axe of the woodman, forest fires, commercial short-sightedness and greed have conspired to do their worst. The lumberman gathers the best and goes his way. It is perhaps true that because of the carelessness of the mountain farmer and neighboring loggers in the matter of fires, it does not pay a lumberman, even so disposed, to seek to insure a second growth. Doubtless, too, uneconomic methods of taxing standing timber and its increase give the logging companies some warrant for reaping a quick harvest.

The mountaineer himself is doing much to lessen the value of these forests. Such valuable wood as black walnut is frequently and commonly used for fire wood or split for rail fences. He is slow to realize the real value of his forest and in many cases hard to teach.

b. Streams. A consideration of the forest of the Southern Highlands naturally raises an inquiry as to the water power dependent so largely upon their conservation. The importance of the Southern Appalachian forests to the development of water power within the Southern States will be more evident when one realizes that practically all the rivers which flow through these States to the Atlantic, Mississippi or the Gulf of Mexico, have their sources in the Highlands; and that inasmuch as there are no natural lakes for water storage within the Highlands, the exceptionally heavy rainfall of the region must be stored and equalized through the action of the forest coves.

Thus upon the proper conservation of these forests depends not only the future industrial development of the immediate section but that of the Piedmont Plateau as well.

The extent of this development through the transmission of electric power cannot yet be estimated. A survey has been carried on by the United States Geological Department[1] which shows that about one ninth of the total potential water of the United States is located in the rivers of the Southern Highland States. The proper control and use of this enormous power will mean much to the entire South.

c. Coal. As has been indicated, our western belt, the Allegheny-Cumberland, is preeminently a region of coal which extends into western areas of the Greater Appalachian Valley. There is no coal in the Blue Ridge Belt.

For convenience, the coal areas of the United States are divided into two great divisions: anthracite, and bituminous and lignite. The anthracite field is confined almost exclusively to an area of about five hundred square miles in Eastern Pennsylvania. The workable, bituminous fields are scattered widely over the United States and include an area of more than three hundred thousand square miles. These fields are divided primarily into six provinces. The coal field of the Southern Highlands is part of the eastern province.

The known area of workable coal within the Highlands is 42,215 square miles, containing an estimated original supply

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[1]United States Senate Document No. 316, 64th Congress

of coal of 344,456,900,000 net tons. In 1917 the production of coal within this area was 145,159,553 net tons. The total production to the end of 1917 was 2,074,343,738 tons.

If no other coal fields be discovered or come to be workable, there is a bituminous coal supply in the Southern Appalachian sufficient for almost 2,300 years if the rate of production be that of 1917; and a supply for 165 years if the annual production equal the total exhaustion from the beginning of mining to the close of 1917.[1]

In the mountain region there were in 1917, 42,215 square miles of coal areas, producing 145,159,553 tons of coal, the value of which was $335,351,304. There were 168,100 miners employed.

It would be interesting to know how many of the total number of miners are native mountaineers. At present they constitute a minority although the number is increasing. Estimates have been made that in some of the Appalachian states the native miners comprise about one third of the miners in those states. As a general statement for the entire region, this would probably be too large a proportion. The mountaineers follow naturally the work to which they have been accustomed, such as lumbering, hauling, and farming; but as they become familiar with mining operations, numbers of them

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[1] Mineral Resources of the United States, 1914, Part II, p.29
Mineral Resources of the United States, 1917, Part II, pp. 903-1409,
Southern Highlands, J.C. Campbell, p. 237

attempt mining and a fair percentage become good miners.

Generally speaking, the returns the mountain people get from the opening of coal mines are indirect returns from the sale of produce from their farms and from business undertakings other than mining that spring up as a result of the opening up of a new territory.

The many problems connected with the betterment of conditions in mining communities in the mountains are primarily those of an industrial development, but they cannot be viewed entirely apart from the rural mountain problem, for mountain life in the vicinity of the mines has already been greatly affected from a social as well as economic standpoint. How to fit the Highlander to take his place in this development, and how to equalize the reaction of industrial conditions upon rural regions adjacent and entirely unprepared for such changes, are questions which must concern all who are interested in the mountain folk.

Iron is an important mineral deposit of the Southern Highlands. The total amount of iron ore shipped in 1917 from this region was 8,396,841 gross tons, valued at $16,437,775. Mica, and copper are found in large quantities throughout the mountain region. Building stones, marble, limestone, granite, sandstone, dolomite and soapstone are all waiting to be quarried and turned into commercial use.

d. Agriculture. Fundamental in any discussion of agricultural resources is the question of soil. The United States Department of Agriculture has carried on various surveys of the soil of the Appalachian region and so some estimate of the available land for agriculture has been made. Of course, the Greater Appalachian Valley is agricultural throughout most of its area, but discounting this entire area and deducting all the non-agricultural lands from the areas of the other two belts, there are left within the two upland belts 49,710 square miles, or 31,814,400 acres with agricultural possibilities. Under the present agricultural methods a hundred-acre farm affords a family support, measured by existing standards.

Various sections, of course, are adapted to different kinds of produce. For instance, the Cumberland Plateau section, though the soil is thin, will grow fruit, apples, peaches, grapes, strawberries and other small fruits. In other sections potatoes should be the crop, while in others a grain crop is the best.

The problem is not so much the quality of the soil, but rather the isolation nature has imposed upon the mountain people,- which means that it is impossible to get their crop anywhere after they raise it. Therefore, they go on simply raising corn and potatoes enough for their own use and let it end there. They disregard all modern methods of agriculture and so defeat their own purpose.

Slowly but surely the change is coming and coming due to "Uncle Sam" and his agricultural department. They as a party with no personal bank account to be helped out, can and do advise the mountaineer for his own advantage. This advice is not always readily taken, but with the help of the Smith Hughes men and various state and county workers scientific methods are rapidly being received with more favor. Many mountain boys go to the state universities and study agriculture. There they find out the truth, become convinced of its value, return and show by actual production what can be done in the way of agriculture on the old mountains.

A mountain realm rich in forests, streams, mines, and soil awaits development. A mountain population with latent possibilities awaits opportunity that it may share in this development and in what it may bring.

SUMMARY

What are the Southern Highlands? The Southern Highlands are a section of the great Appalachian Mountain Range. They include the four western counties of Maryland; the Blue Ridge Valley and Allegheny Ridge counties of Virginia; all of West Virginia; eastern Tennessee; eastern Kentucky; western North Carolina; four northeast counties of South Carolina; northern Georgia, and northwestern Alabama.

This mountain region embraces an area nearly as large as the combined areas of New York and New England, and almost equal to that of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

Who are the Southern Highlanders? The first settlers of the Appalachians were the Swiss and Palatine Germans loosely termed today as "Pennsylvania Dutch, who about the year 1682 began to settle west of the Quakers, in the foothills of the Alleghenies and the Blue Ridge.

The chief settlers, however, were the Ulstermen of Ireland, "the Scotch Irish," as we call them, and they are still the predominant strain of this region.

The Highlander at home is the most interesting and fascinating being. His true home, of course, is the log cabin, and many still live in cabins, but many do not. The modern bungalow with all the "fixings" is in the mountain in large numbers. It all depends on whether the mountaineer lives in the county seat or far off among

the hills as to what his physical home is. In the rural mountain home, the log cabin, we find a charming and interesting home life with its "Mammy and Pappy" and plenty of children.

The home life of the rural mountain people has been greatly misrepresented in many ways by writers of popular fiction in their desire to create a good story to sell. They are not so "quare" when one truly knows them. In no part of our country will one find a more deep and sincere interest in matters of religion than in the Southern Highlands. Their religion, it is true, is not very dainty. It is the religion of a stalwart independent people. The Southern Highlander's mind is still tinctured very strongly with the Calvinism of his foreparents. God is very real; so are heaven and hell.

In the mountains, illiteracy is not necessarily synonymous with ignorance. If we accept as a definition of education, "adaptation of life to environment," many an Highlander would compare favorably with some of the college graduates who have come into his community to educate him.

However, the illiterate man is not a free man and if America is to receive the best from her mountain people, they must have a formal education.

The mountain boys and girls are very normal. Some learn quickly, and some do not; some are easily taught, and some are not; some want to go to school, and some do not. But they should all have the chance for education that the average American child

has and at present they certainly do not.

The so-called "Moonlight Schools" and "Danish Schools" for the advancement of adult education throughout the mountain region have met with marked success in both Kentucky and North Carolina.

The mountains are not without their natural resources. Lumber, coal, water power and soil are the natural resources of the Southern Highlands, and to a greater extent than most of us realize.

The shrewd business man realizes it; but is he going to develop these resources for the greatest advantage for the greatest number or is he going to take his loot and go off?

A mountain realm rich in forests, streams, mines and soil awaits development. A mountain population, with latent possibilities, awaits opportunity that it may share in this development and in what it may bring.

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